in the country is growing at a fast rate. In order to meet the growing demand due to the rapid growth of the mobile services and for improving the mobile connectivity, the telecom Service Providers are to progressively augment their mobile network infrastructure and optimize the same.

Rural credit to the needy in villages

4597. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the India Post of A.P. circle has signed an MoU with any of the Public Sector Banks to provide short-term rural credit to the needy in the villages on the lines of the initiatives taken in Maharashtra circle;

(b) if so, since when the facility has come into force and the number of villagers that have been provided with short-term consumption credit;

(c) the amount of commission the India Post is paid for each loan by the Banks and the estimated total income from the above source; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) No proposal has been finalized as yet.

Mega GSM tender in CIT Sector

†4598. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to award a mega GSM tender for the companies related to Communications and Information Technology sector; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in the matter on the part of Government and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Techno Commercial bid of tender of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) for 45.5 million GSM based network was opened on 12.06.2006 and financial bid was opened on 09.10.2006. One of the bidders found techno commercially non-compliant had approached Hon'ble High Court against the decision of BSNL. The case has now been withdrawn by them on 16.04.2007. The evaluation process has now been concluded.

Allocation benefits to Scs and Sts

4599. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rs. 10.60 crores were allocated to the Ministry for the year 2006-07 to spend on programmes with at least 20 per cent allocation benefits to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(b) the programmes which have been undertaken by his Ministry for 2006-07 with details of budget, funds utilized,quantitative and qualitative benefits accrued to the empowerment and welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, therefrom, State-wise;and

(c) the programmes to be undertaken for 2007-08 with 20 per cent at least allocation benefits out of the Budget allocation of Rs.30 crores with details thereof and the amount likely to be spent thereon, benefits to be accrued to these sections, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details of the programmes approved by Department of